



NOTES FROM THE RANGE

May 27, 2014



Bob Dole back in Kansas

I am always proud to see Bob Dole and it's especially great to have him back in our state.

I joined Senator Dole during a recent visit to Topeka. More than 100 people turned out to greet him.

***Bob Dole: a great Kansan,
a great American***

The Kansas economy continues to grow

We continue to see signs of an improving economy in Kansas. Signs that translate to jobs for Kansans and opportunities for Kansas businesses.

The April seasonally adjusted unemployment rate was 4.8%. This marks the fifth consecutive month in which Kansas has seen unemployment below 5%, which has not happened since fall of 2008.

We also have more Kansans working than ever before: 1,494,118 of them to be precise.

The Kansas labor market — which is the number of people working — is increasing. Our unemployment rate is dropping as more people find work, whereas at the national level the unemployment rate is dropping as people leave the labor pool and stop looking for work.

We are seeing positive signs in other indicators as well. Since 2010, we have outperformed most of our neighboring states in terms of growing private sector wages, private sector employment, personal income and population.

Our economic growth continues even as one of our most important industries, manufacturing small jets, remains challenged. Wichita truly is the aviation center of the world and we continue advocate for this important industry and the jobs it supports for Kansans.

One of the reasons for our continued economic strength can be found in the hard work and innovation of many of our Kansas businesses, both large and small and the exporting of Kansas goods both domestic and international.

At the most recent Council of Economic Advisors meeting, Dr. Troy Davig of the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City said that 8.3 percent of all U.S. jobs are supported through exports. Kansas outperforms neighboring states in exporting, in large part due to our diverse base of industries that export.

In 2013, Kansas exports total \$12.45 billion, an increase of 25 percent since 2010. In our five state region, including Kansas, Colorado, Missouri, Nebraska and Oklahoma, the average export value in 2013 was \$9.67 billion.

At that meeting, Chad Lane of Excel Industries—the 2013 Governor's Exporter of the Year— said the Kansas workforce, energy supply and entrepreneurial culture are part of what gives our state an advantage in exporting.

Kansas workers, Kansas jobs, Kansas work ethic. It's little wonder that Kansas is leading a Midwest Renaissance.

Sam Brownback



HB 2023 Fire Fighter Bill— this bill fixed the 1967 “Heart Amendment” that kept firefighters & law enforcement from receiving workers compensation benefits if when injured or killed on the job by a heart attack or stroke



Memorial Day — at Fort Riley with Major General Funk following a ceremony to honor those who have given their lives in service to America.



Law Enforcement Memorial Day — A touching tribute to the men and women who protect us every day.



New Kindergarten —A new kindergarten classroom at the historic Brown v Board building will soon be full of children learning



JAG student scholarship — JAG student Destiny Shelton (center) received a national scholarship and plans to attend college. Here we are joined by her family, teachers, fellow students and DCF Secretary Phyllis Gilmore. Story on page 3.

Student achieves dreams through JAG program

On May 19, I had the honor of meeting 17-year-old Destiny Shelton, who just graduated from Stafford High School.

Destiny faced tremendous hardship growing up including the death of her father, poverty and neglect. She was considered “high risk” to drop out of high school, but Destiny refused to become a statistic.

Instead of dropping out, she graduated from Stafford High School as part of its class of After Jobs for America’s Graduates (JAG) program students. She also was named one of 21 students across the country to receive a Smith Scholarship from the JAG National Committee.

She has been accepted to the University of Kansas where she will pursue a degree in psychology.

Students like Destiny show the important role the JAG program can play in helping them be successful in school and in life. She is just one example of Kansas students who have defied the odds.

Because of the hard work of these students and the teachers and mentors who work with them through the JAG program, they are succeeding.

The Kansas JAG program is completing its first full school year. Without intervention from JAG, it’s estimated these students would have had a 50% graduation rate. Instead, their graduation rate is 94%, the highest of any JAG program in the nation.

JAG is a multi-year program for students in grades 9 through 12, offering tools to help students transition into post-secondary education or the labor market. JAG is funded by the Department for Children and Families.

Since its implementation, the Kansas JAG program has been the largest and most successful JAG start up in the history of the national program. Currently 875 students are involved in JAG and that is expected to double by next school year.

For more information on the JAG program, visit the national website at www.jag.org

Lt. Gov. Colyer treating ill and injured in South Sudan

Lt. Governor Jeff Colyer, a surgeon, has worked for more than 20 years with International Medical Corps, a global nonprofit organization providing medical care and relieving suffering in some of the harshest conditions found.

Today he is in South Sudan caring for some of the most vulnerable people and treating a broad range of medical conditions.

Dr. Colyer reports evidence of impending famine and multiple medical issues from wounds to cholera to general medical care.

In addition to ministering to the sick and performing surgery, Dr. Colyer and IMC work to respond to rapidly escalating emergency situations and provide the training to help bring local health care systems back to self-reliance.



International Medical Corps — Conditions in South Sudan are challenging. Patients there are suffering from a wide range of health issues and injuries and facing impending famine.